

**Tiverton Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 17, 2014
Town Hall, 343 Highland Road, Tiverton, RI**

Chairman Ramotowski called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Members Present: T. Ramotowski (Chair), P. Mellow, N. Cote, and P. Hilton.

Members Absent: R. Guimond and L. Cottrell.

Also Present: W. Gerlach (Tiverton Town Council).

I. Public Delegations: There were no public delegations.

II. Approval of Minutes: There were no sets of minutes available for approval

III. Treasurer's Report: Mr. Mello reported that the Commission had spent its entire budget for the year. Recently, payments were made to Chairman Ramotowski for postage expenses, and to the Lloyd Center for the Watershed Watch Program.

IV. Brief Announcements:

Mr. Mello noted that the town of Middletown, RI had received a \$4,000,000.00 grant to pay for damage caused by Hurricane Sandy.

V. New Bussiness:

CRMC Public Notice/Casey/5 Sunset View Drive/Construction of Dock on the Sakonnet River:

Chairman Ramotowski stated that the Commission received a letter indicating the an application for construction of a dock on the Sakonnet River had been received. The details for the dock appeared to be routine and no further Commission action will be taken.

VI. Old Business:

Tiverton Landfill as "Storm Debris Storage Area" for Newport County?

Mr. Gerlach stated that he would bring this issue up at a future Town Council meeting.

*Review of "Watershed Protection Overlay District" Language/Tiverton Planning Board:
Annual Report for the Town Council:*

Ms. Hilton reported that Gail McGowan of the Atlantic States Wind, Water and Wastewater Association will be helping the Town determine how to better protect its watersheds. She will be focusing on Stafford Pond and Nonquit Pond. There was a tour of the water treatment plant on Stafford Pond, as well as a tour of the Pond itself. The plan is to generate a large map marked with areas/items of concern from a water quality perspective.

Ms. Hilton stated that some of the draft language for changes in the watershed protection overlay districts had been written, but as of yet it had not been reviewed by the consultants. There is also a need to review the community well situation in the vicinity of Tiverton Four Corners. The DEM also wants to get back in touch with the Town regarding proposed protections for Stafford Pond. A new meeting with the DEM is tentatively scheduled for June 24, 2014.

Discussion ensued if there should be separate language/sections for Stafford Pond and Nonquit Pond. Right now the overlay district language covers both Pond watersheds, so both ponds are treated the same.

Mr. Gerlach distributed a list of possible Town and DEM actions that could be taken to improve and protect water quality in Stafford Pond. He stated that the Town Administrator and the Director of the DEM met about a month ago, and there is a desire to have both sides meet again face-to-face. It is probably better to get things that the Town wants done on the Pond passed as some kind of legislation so that the DEM would have to cooperate regardless of changes in the director or other staff members.

Chairman Ramotowski noted that the Conservation Commission would be meeting with the interested members of the public about possible restrictions of recreational uses on Stafford Pond in next month. Mr. Gerlach agreed that it would not make sense to meet the DEM Director until the Conservation Commission's meeting with the public had occurred.

Town Zoning Ordinance for Earth Removal/Quarrying:

Ms. Hilton reported that the hydrogeologist (Chris Covel) who had been recommended to examine the effects quarrying in Town was possibly having on groundwater quality finally did meet with the Town Administrator and he also visited some of the quarry sites. Based upon his one day visit, he concluded that the Town had a much bigger problem than he could handle. In several areas, the quarrying operations had broken into the groundwater table and they could be degrading the quality of groundwater in the surrounding area. The Town was in dire need of groundwater test wells and construction monitoring at these locations. Typically, the group extracting the rock/gravel at the quarry would pay for such monitoring. Tiverton apparently does not require any such monitoring. It was unclear how the Town would follow up with his rather alarming assessment of the status of the quarries.

Moreira Subdivision/Stafford Road/Watershed Protection Overlay District:

This item was continued by the Planning Board until its next regular meeting.

Statewide Ban on Use of Plastic Shopping Bags

It was noted that the State of California had voted to ban the use of plastic shopping bags. In Rhode Island, the Town of Barrington has adopted a ban. It is unclear if there is enough interest in the State to try to enact a State-wide ban on the use of such bags.

VII. Standing Committee Reports:

Town Comprehensive Plan Review Committee:

Ms. Hilton, the Conservation Commission's member on the subject committee, reported that the committee had held several meetings and two public hearings. The public hearings were not well attended. The Cecil Group (the Town's consultants for the project) will coordinate consolidation of all the public input.

Litter Prevention Initiatives:

Town Council Trash Barrel Initiative at Town Parks:

Mr. Gerlach noted that the Town had to improve how it handled trash and recycling at its recreation sites. Presently, there isn't much recycling going on at these locations, even though much of the trash they generated could be recycled. The trash and recycling barrels need to be located side-by-side. The Town receives money each year from the recycling plant at the Central Landfill, and that money has to be spent on improving recycling efforts. The Town has accumulated about \$47,000.00 in that account. Mr. Gerlach stated that he was interested in possibly purchasing solar-powered compactors to help with the trash situation. These compactors can send out a radio signal to the DPW when they are full so that they can be emptied before a trash overflow situation develops.

Mr. Gerlach asked if such devices could be used at Fogland. Chairman Ramotowski noted that a major problem with collecting trash at Fogland was the near constant wind, and the fact that seagulls or other forms of wildlife used to get into the collection barrels and scatter the trash around the beach. Any kind of collection barrel would have to be firmly fixed to a section of chain-link fence or a firmly anchored wooden post. There is also the issue that Fogland is quite isolated from the bulk of the Town, and has been suffering from a rash of vandalism recently.

Stafford Pond Issues Update:

RI-DEM Public Hearing on Fishing Regulations:

Chairman Ramotowski reported that he attended the RI-DEM Public Hearing on Fishing Regulations, held at the Warwick Police Station on June 3, 2014. Chairman Ramotowski stated that he reviewed the Stafford Pond situation and asked the DEM to ban fishing

tournaments on the Pond and re-institute the requirement for boat engines to be 10 HP or less. He also asked the DEM to stop stocking the Pond with trout, noting that the DEM stocked such fish at over 80 locations throughout the State, so the dropping of one location would hardly be missed. A resolution outlining the Town's concerns about activities originating from the DEM-owned boat ramp at Stafford Pond had been mailed to the DEM and was added to the hearing record. There was no response from the DEM employees in attendance because the meeting was a public hearing to obtain testimony from members of the public. Chairman Ramotowski stated that he also reminded the DEM that the Town had enacted some local regulations governing fishing tournaments on Stafford Pond that fishermen needed to be aware of and obey.

Update to Town Council:

This update will be give some time after the second Conservation Commission Stafford Pond recreational activities public hearing has taken place in July of 2014.

Fogland Beach Issues Update:

Draft Updates for Section 54 of the Town Code:

Chairman Ramotowski stated that nothing had occurred yet on this issue from a Town Council perspective. The Fogland Beach Oversight Committee had decided that additional language was needed in Section 54 of the Town Code to clarify the location/boundaries of the conservation area – as it reads now, the conservation area's location references the location of the playground, which was recently moved. That language needs to be changes to remove the ambiguities created by the relocation of the playground.

Landfill Issues:

There was nothing new to report.

VIII. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 PM

Submitted by:

Dr. T. S. Ramotowski, Chairman